Today’s Presenter

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Native Stories, Native Peoples: Opportunities for Library Engagement

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Overview

- Demographics of American Indians
- Tribal Crit and Libraries
- Visibility and Acknowledgment of Native Nations
- Small but Mighty
- Questions
What do you think of when I say Native Americans?
Demographics

2019 American Community Survey, out of the 5.7 million people who identified as American Indian and Alaska Native, 4.4 million also identified with at least one tribal grouping.

The nation's American Indian and Alaska Native population alone in 2020 was 3.7 million. This population group identifies as AIAN only and did not identify with any other race.

574 federally recognized Indian tribes in 2022.

324 distinct, federally recognized American Indian reservations in 2022, including federal reservations and off-reservation trust land.

https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2022/comm/aian-month.html
AIAN Population

60 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in metropolitan areas.

Leading metropolitan areas with the highest percentage of American Indian or Alaska Native population in the U.S. in 2019

U.S. metropolitan areas with the highest percentage of native population 2019

Where do you get information about Native Americans?
Tribal Nations & the United States: An Introduction
National Congress of American Indians

https://www.ncai.org/about-tribes
Sources for information

Tribal Websites and Tribal Newspapers
National Congress of American Indians https://www.ncai.org/
National Museum of the American Indian https://americanindian.si.edu/
National Archives https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans
Native Knowledge 360 https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/faq/did-you-know
Census My Tribal Area https://www.census.gov/tribal/
Indian Country Today https://ictnews.org/
Native News Online https://nativenewsonline.net/
Indianz.com- Ho-Chunk Nation https://www.indianz.com/
Tribal Critical Race Theory


1. Colonization is endemic to society.

2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.

3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.

4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.

5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.

6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.

7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.

8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.

9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change.

Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy
Treaties—sacred agreements between sovereign nations—lie at the heart of the relationship between Indian Nations and the United States. Native Nations made treaties with one another long before Europeans came to the Western Hemisphere. The United States began making treaties with Native Peoples because they were independent nations. Often broken, sometimes coerced, treaties still define mutual obligations between the United States and Indian Nations. The eight treaties featured in Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations, on loan from the National Archives and Records Administration, are representative of the approximately 374 that were ratified between the United States and Native Nations.

https://americanindian.si.edu/nationtonation/
US Government Policies

**COLONIAL PERIOD**
The proliferation of European colonies created a dominant presence on North America’s East Coast. These colonies acquired Indian lands under the so-called Doctrine of Discovery and signed treaties with the tribal nations. Following the Revolutionary War, the newborn United States worked with tribal nations on a government-to-government basis.

**REMOVAL, RESERVATION, AND TREATY PERIOD**
The U.S. government's pressure on eastern tribal nations to move west, resulting in forced migration. Seeking to obtain more tribal land, the government embarked on an aggressive military campaign throughout the west, relocating tribal nations to reservations. In general, reservations were established through treaties, which required tribal nations to trade large tracts of land for the continued right of self-governance under the protection of the United States.

**ALLOTMENT AND ASSIMILATION PERIOD**
Settlers' increasing desire for the land within reservations and the push to assimilate Natives into mainstream American life led to the General Allotment Act of 1887. This Act (also known as the Dawes Act) dictated the forced conversion of communally held tribal lands into small parcels for ownership by individual Natives. More than 90 million acres—nearly two-thirds of reservation land—were taken from tribal nations and given to settlers, most often without compensation to tribal nations.

**INDIAN REORGANIZATION PERIOD**
The federal government, under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, ended the discredited policy of allotment. It began to restore tribal lands to tribal nations and attempted to help tribal nations reform their governments. The federal government created programs and projects to help rehabilitate reservation economies.

**TERMINATION PERIOD**
Congress decided to terminate federal recognition and assistance to more than 100 tribal nations. Public Law 280, passed in 1953, imposed state criminal and civil jurisdiction on many tribal nations in California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Wisconsin. These policies created economic disaster for many tribal nations, resulting in the loss of millions of acres of valuable natural resource land through tax forfeiture sales. Federal policy emphasized the physical relocation of Native people from reservations to urban areas.

**SELF DETERMINATION PERIOD**
Since taking office in January 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken historic steps to support Tribal communities in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, advance equity and opportunity for all American Indians and Alaska Natives, and help Tribal Nations overcome new and longstanding challenges. The Administration’s work is rooted in the President’s respect for the unique Nation-to-Nation relationship, commitment to the country’s trust and treaty responsibilities, and desire to strengthen Tribal sovereignty and advance Tribal self-determination. The White House Tribal Nations Summit is an opportunity to celebrate the progress we have made in this new Nation-to-Nation era and map out plans to improve outcomes for this generation of Native Americans and for the seven generations to come.

**Working Together to Defeat COVID-19.** When President Biden took office, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated pre-existing health care inequities facing Tribal Nations and disproportionately affected Native American populations across the country. American Indians and Alaska Natives experienced infection rates over three times higher than non-Hispanic whites, were four times more likely to be hospitalized as a result of COVID-19. The Biden-Harris Administration took rapid action to mitigate these disparities and save lives in Tribal communities, including through: 

- Expanding the capacity to test, treat, and provide vaccines to Tribal Nations and other communities facing significant challenges.
- Increasing the availability of personal protective equipment and medical supplies.
- Expanding and improving access to telehealth services.
- Providing financial assistance to Tribal Nations to support their ongoing response efforts.

In addition, the Administration has taken steps to address the disparities in vaccination rates, including through the following:

- Increasing the number of vaccination sites in underserved communities.
- Creating culturally competent outreach and education campaigns.
- Establishing partnerships with Tribal Nations to ensure accurate and accessible information.

This approach has been successful in reducing disparities in vaccination rates in Tribal communities.

Boarding Schools

From 1819 to 1969, the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states or then territories, including 21 schools in Alaska and 7 schools in Hawaii.

The investigation identified marked or unmarked burial sites at approximately 53 different schools across the system. As the investigation continues, the Department expects the number of identified burial sites to increase.

https://www.bia.gov/service/federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative
We are Still Here

“I think about the stories we don’t hear.”

“Who is telling this story and from what perspective?”

Photo: Walnut Canyon National Monument in Northern Arizona, courtesy Grand Canyon Trust
Visibility and Acknowledgement

Is there visibility and acknowledgement in your library of Native Nations?
Are there books in your collection by Native authors?
Partnerships

Phoenix Suns City Jersey honors Arizona 22 Tribal Nations

https://www.nba.com/suns/originativ
Empowering Families


Photos by Naomi Bishop
Popular Culture

Television and movies featuring Native actors continues to help with representation of Native youth.

“Native American creators pave the way for more Indigenous stories, representation in Hollywood”
Fashion and Arts

What’s New?
New Native YA Books

- **Project 502**
  - Changing the Way We See Native America
  - Matika Wilbur

- **MASCOT**
  - Discrimination is discrimination, even when people claim it’s ‘tradition’
  - Charles Waters
  - Traci Sorell

- **Braiding Sweetgrass**
  - Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants
  - Robin Wall Kimmerer

- **Harvest House**
  - New York Times bestselling author
  - Cynthia Leitich Smith

- **The Summer of Bitter and Sweet**
  - Jen Ferguson

- **Man Made Monsters**
  - Illustrated by Jodi Edwards
  - Andrea L. Rogers

- **Warrior Girl Unearthed**
  - Angeline Boulley
What can teachers and librarians do?

- Collection Development policy that reviews books for stereotypes and misrepresentations
- Invite local tribal communities, to be guest speakers or a part of school programs
- Discuss, display, and learn about Indigenous knowledges and environments.
- Think critically and evaluate and weed your collections

- Buy, promote, and read own voices books written and illustrated by American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander authors and illustrators
- Educate yourself and students about the Native communities
- Join and support American Indian Library Association and other Native American non-profit organizations
Small but Mighty

“Change takes time and sacrifice”

Plant seeds - Cultivate seeds - Water seeds

Growth and transformation

Check-in with communities and ask for their perspectives on what they want to see at the library.

Listen to their stories, acknowledge their stories, tear down barriers.

Go beyond the surface and build relationships and partnerships with community organizations.

Reflect on impact. Many times Native Americans are overlooked and not valued or celebrated in communities.
References

American Indian and Alaska Native Data Links

Facts for Features: American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month: November 2022


NMAI Nation to Nation https://americanindian.si.edu/nationtonation/

Heartdrum an Imprint of HarperCollins

Teacher’s Guide for Indigenous Peoples History for Young People, adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese